DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 223 490 SO 014 347

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TITLE Politics and the Structure of Policy Thinking.
PUB DATE Sep 82
NOTE 48p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association (Denver, CO, September 2-5, 1982). Some pages may be marginally legible due to fading ink.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cluster Grouping; Cognitive Ability; *Federal Government; *Political Attitudes; *Political Issues; Political Science; Politics; *Public Opinion; Public Policy; Social Science Research; *State Government
IDENTIFIERS Florida

ABSTRACT

A comparison of public opinion about state and national political issues focuses on the degree of constraint expressed by individuals. Constraint is the individual's tendency to coherently cluster issues. It is manifested when, for example, one favors tax cuts and decreased spending; lack of constraint is illustrated when an individual simultaneously supports increased spending and tax cuts. Data were obtained from a cross-sectional survey of 929 adults in Florida. Participants responded to 15 key policy issues, both at state and national levels. Direction, intensity, and salience of each issue were measured. Participants' opinions can be categorized into four clusters: national policies concerning morals and the disadvantaged; state policies on taxing and spending. State attitudes were considerably less constrained than national attitudes. Conditions which contributed to constraint were high cognitive ability and exposure to political issues; however, political exposure was more important than cognitive ability on issues clearly characterized as liberal or conservative. At the state level, the basic problem is separation in the public mind between taxing and spending, a distinction which sends contradictory signals to political leaders. (KC)

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POLITICS AND THE STRUCTURE OF POLICY THINKING

by

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SP 014347

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ABSTRACT

Politics and the Structure of Policy Thinking

Drawing upon a 1981 statewide telephone survey, this study compares the structure of policy thinking on state versus national issues within the Florida public. Positions on 15 key policy issues were ascertained. National issues were found to be more salient than state issues, and positions on national issues were more constrained. The sort of ideological thinking represented by constraint increased with cognitive ability, issue salience, political interest, and perceived use of ideological frameworks. The conditions for higher constraint, though, varied by issue and level of government. These findings demonstrate, in a novel way, the dependence of structured policy thinking on the immediate political milieu and the individual's own political sophistication. By illustrating the relative formlessness of policy thinking about important Florida issues, they also raise serious questions concerning the quality of public thinking about state politics and consequently about the possibilities for public influence in a time of increasing state policy responsibilities.

Politics and The Structure of Policy Thinking

INTRODUCTION

Relationships among issue positions within the mass public long have been of considerable interest to students of political life. These relationships reflect ideological thinking about American politics, whether explicit through deductions from overarching belief systems or implicit (Converse, 1964). The fact that positions on one policy issue can be predicted with a degree of accuracy from positions on others shows that issues cohere in bundles, or are "constrained," within the public mind. Conventional interpretations of politics in liberal-conservative terms presume that constraint is widespread and substantial. That is why Converse's findings that constraint in the late 1950s within the electorate was low and narrow in scope is so striking.

Since Converse's original work, research has focused primarily on the conditions of issue constraint. Some researchers have located the sources of constraint in the political milieu itself, arguing that elite political conflict provides the critical stimuli for citizen organization of policy issue beliefs. Other researchers have seen issue constraint as the result of individual characteristics, particularly cognitive ability and attention to politics. Both lines of inquiry have yielded important and useful results, and most scholars would agree that both political milieu and individual characteristics structure mass thinking about policy issues. Yet, neither line of inquiry has been entirely conclusive. Substantial uncertainty remains about what promotes greater structuring of policy beliefs in the citizenry.

The impact of the political milieu has been inferred from changes in levels of constraint over a series of presidential elections since the 1950s.

The correlations among domestic policy attitudes are considerably higher in the 1964 to 1972 period than before (Bennett, 1973; Nie and Andersen, 1974; Nie, Verba, Petrocik, 1979). Nie, Verba, and Petrocik (1979) found a decline in constraint after 1972 but not to the pre-1964 levels. The conventional explanation for this increased constraint is that the political world changed beginning with the 1964 election. Political conflict became more intense and ideological, political issues more salient. Replacing the quiescent Eisenhower years, during which even the traditional New Deal conflicts appear to have been muted, were the turbulent 1960s and early 1970s. Greater constraint in public thinking about political issues is seen as a mass response to a rise in issue conflict among elites.

The empirical patterns that provide the foundation for these inferences, though, have come under sharp challenge. Sullivan, Pierescn, and Marcus (1978) and Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Oldendick (1978a, 1978b) contend that the post-1960 upsurge in constraint is the artifactual result of changes in format of the policy issue questions used by the Michigan election studies. The improved reliability of the issue questions in 1964 and thereafter, they argue, has reduced attenuation in the true relationships between issue positions which was the major source of low correlations before. While poor measurement may have led Converse to understate the levels of constraint in the mass public before the 1960s, if these criticisms are valid (and I believe they are in large part), it is difficult to argue that the political milieu of the 1960s promoted more coherent structuring of political beliefs.

The existing evidence can not provide a conclusive test of effects of the political milieu upon issue constraint. Unfortunately, the changes in question format are coterminous with the alleged changes in political milieu,

making them impossible to disentangle. A further problem arises from the changing importance of various political issues. Some issues achieve prominence only in the context of one particular election campaign (e.g., Reagan's proposed 30% tax cut in 1980). Other issues, while longstanding, vary in their centrality to the current political agenda (e.g., racial issues) and consequently in their expected relationships with other issues. Finally, because the election surveys sample only a few issues from a larger universe, replicating some (although their meanings may change) but replacing others, great caution must be exercised in inferring effects of political milieu from temporal changes in constraint. Clearly, a more refined test for the impact of political milieu is in order.

The second approach to the study of issue constraint has been to identify the individual characteristics associated with more constrained thinking. The direction of this research was set originally by Converse (1964, 212-213):

> It is well established that differences in information held in a cross-section population are simply staggering, running from vast treasuries of well organized information among elites interested in the particular subject to fragments that could virtually be measured as a few 'bits' in the technical sense...Of course, the ordering of individuals on this vertical information scale is largely due to differences in education, but it is strongly modified as well by different specialized interests and tastes that individuals have acquired over time.

Since Converse's pioneering work several studies have examined the correlates of policy attitude constraint. Initial research confirmed Converse's expectations about the effects of cognitive ability but raised from afterthought to independent theoretical status alternative sources of constraint. Axelrod (1967) found greater constraint in 1956 among the politically active, the wealthy, the politically informed and concerned, as well as college graduates.[1] Bennett (1973) examined social welfare attitudes

in the 1964 and 1968 Michigan surveys and found that, while the attitudes of college graduates were most constrained, constraint also was high among the most interested and most active. Stimson's (1975) study of constraint on key issues in 1972, on the other hand, provides more unqualified support for the original Converse expectations. The cognitively able, as measured by education and political information, exhibited substantially greater constraint and higher correlations between issue positions and self-placement on a liberal-conservative scale.

More recent studies directly challenge the hypothesis that educational achievement increases constraint. While Nie, Verba, and Petrocik (1979, 145-155) found greater constraint among respondents with at least some college education than among those without a high school diploma throughout the 1956-1972 period, the differences are modest and often insignificant. Working from the same 1958 study employed initially by Converse, Wray (1979) discovered that college graduates' attitudes were not more constrained on foreign policy issues. Judd and Milburn (1980) showed, using a latent structure technique, that the college educated in the 1972-1974-1976 Michigan panel study did not exhibit higher constraint.

Such findings have led Converse (1975, 1979, 1980) to revise his initial thinking about the sources of constraint. Education, he now argues, should lead to higher levels of constraint only insomuch as it is correlated with such measures of political sophistication as information, involvement, or ideology. When these correlations turn out in fact to be less than robust, only a weak relationship between education and constraint is to be expected. This line of thinking moves Converse away from a cognitive ability explanation for policy attitude constraint towards explanations that focus on various

forms of attentiveness to political life, especially political involvement.

The inconsistency in findings concerning education as a source of constraint and the lack of careful or systematic attention to other sources of constraint in policy thinking leave unresolved the question of what are the sources of policy thinking much of the confusion is no doubt the product of differences in the policy attitudes studied and the particular sources under examination. Some confusion perhaps was sown by Converse's original emphasis on education as the surrogate measure for a much broader concept.

Ignored entirely in this debate is the possibility that the sources of constraint vary with the policy issues under consideration. Where the issues have been central to elite debates along the familiar liberal-conservative lines, attentiveness to politics and commitment to the prevailing ideological organization of politics may promote constraint more than cognitive ability. For issues that are not well integrated into liberal-conservative political discourse among elites, on the other hand, cognitive ability may be relatively more important because other sources of organization for political beliefs are inadequate. These considerations suggest that a more comprehensive examination of the sources of constraint is in order.

The objective of this study is to shed new light on the sources of constraint in mass policy beliefs. Reliance on the national election surveys of the University of Michigan has forced previous research to focus on national policy issues and to induce variation in the political milieu by studying different election years. Such a focus ignores the considerable variation in political milieus at any one time within the American system. The United States contains at least fifty-one distinct political systems, each

with its own issue agenda and political culture. Each American citizen lives in at least two different systems simultaneously, state and national. This fact provides us with a valuable opportunity to study the effects of different political milieus on the same individuals.

Previous research also has relied upon secondary data to study the conditions of attitude constraint. With secondary data, the investigator is forced to take measures as given, however inappropriate they may be to his purposes. This has forced different investigators to employ somewhat different measures of the key concepts, particularly the policy issues themselves. A study designed explicitly to examine the sources of constraint can overcome both of these limitations. The inclusion of two different political milieus simultaneously also increases the number of tests for the relationships between particular conditions and constraint.

This study adopts a novel design for the study of the structure of policy thinking in mass publics. A sample from the electorate of one state, Florida, was asked a series of questions about national and state policy issues as well as about the nature of their involvement in politics at both levels of government. Some questions concerned issues of state politics. Another set of questions was asked about domestic policy at the national level. The questions about national issues were adapted directly from the 1980 National Election Study survey to allow comparison of responses of Floridians to those of a national sample. For each policy issue, both direction and intensity of the policy attitude were measured. Respondents were asked also to indicate how much they thought about the issue, as a measure of salience. Contrary to normal practice, this question followed the issue position question.

The data come from a cross-sectional survey of the Florida adult population conducted by telephone between April 20 and May 15, 1981. The sample was drawn by the two-stage random digit dialing method (Waksberg, 1978) with equal probability selection of adults within the home (Troldahl and Carter, 1964). Questioning was done by well-trained paid interviewers under careful supervision from central facilities. A total of 929 people were interviewed, and the response rate for the study was 68%. The data are weighted in the following analysis to correct for unequal probabilities of selection due to number of telephones and size of family. The weighted frequencies on important demographic characteristics conform closely to 1980 census estimates for the adult population.

CONSTRAINT IN STATE AND NATIONAL POLICY ATTITUDES

The clearest effects of the political milieu may be found in the differences in policy thinking between state and national issues. An hypothesis that public attitudes are less constrained on state issues is justified on at least two grounds. Americans follow national politics more closely than state politics (Jennings and Zeigler, 1970), and differential attentiveness alone may be responsible for higher constraint on national issues. The increasing nationalization of American politics (Stokes, 1967), accelerated by the growth in the national government since the 1930s and the nationalization of the mass media with the spread of network radio and television, has made Washington the focal point of political attention.

As much as it stimulates policy thinking, attention alone may not be sufficient for <u>structured</u> policy thinking. Also required is a bundling of policy issues in public political discourse, such as that achieved when

liberal or conservative labels are attached to positions on the major issues of the day. This kind of bundling has been pronounced in national politics since the New Deal realignment, induced by debate over attempts to broaden the involvement of government in everyday affairs. In particular, two-party competition has sharpened alternative positions on these central issues of the national political agenda. By contrast, inter-party competition has been rather feeble in the states (Jewell and Olson, 1979, pp. 15-50), making it more difficult for the public to discern issue bundles on state policy issues.

This hypothesis of relatively greater constraint on national policy issues can be tested directly by comparing constraint on state and national policy issues for Floridians. Table 1 provides the raw materials for such a comparison. The measure of constraint is Goodman and Kruskal's gamma rank order correlation, the coefficient used in most previous research on attitudinal constraint. Issue positions are measured along a five-point scale, incorporating both direction and intensity. Also included in Table 1 are the gamma correlations for each issue with self-placement on a 7-point liberal-conservative scale.[2] (See Appendix A for the wording of each question.)

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Issue constraint is greater on national than on state issues. Of the 21 correlations involving state issues, only 5 are greater than .20. Of the 28 national issue correlations, on the other hand, 10 surpass this threshold. The strongest state issue correlation is .24, while six national correlations exceed this level--some by a considerable amount. The average

Table 1

CONSTRAINT IN POLICY ISSUE ATTITUDES*

	LOCAL	SCHOOL	STATE TAX	ROAD TAX	SPEND CAP	TAX BREAKS	GOV SIZE	JOB GUAR	MIN AID	FED TAX	ECON POL	ERA	ABOR-TION	PRAYER	IDE-OLOGY
TUITION	23	24	12	09	-01	03	13	32	29	18	22	26	04	-13	17
LOCAL		16	20	08	06	05	13	28	23	26	19	21	-01	07	20
SCHOOL			23	18	03	01	05	07	13	09	05	12	11	-12	17
STATE TAX				13	20	17	17	-02	08	44	00	11	15	-08	08
ROAD TAX					11	06	08	08	15	08	06	15	09	11	12
SPEND CAP						02	11	00	10	12	-06	-02	07	04	02
TAX BREAKS							-03	00	10	07	-02	-02	02	-07	-02
GOV SIZE								09	06	21	09	05	-07	-01	09
JOB GUAR									46	20	33	32	-13	-03	17
MIN AID										15	18	26	-06	06	14
FED TAX											20	18	04	03	18
ECON POL												21	-07	00	13
ERA													17	26	27
ABORTION														33	15
PRAYER															13

*Matrix entries are gamma coefficients, without the leading decimal points.

Source: Spring 1981 Policy Sciences Program Survey.

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correlation among the national issues is .13, and their range is -.07 to .46. The average correlation for the state issues is a slightly lower .11 with a range of -.01 to .24.

The scope of constraint in policy attitudes is not broad. We have measured attitudes on many of the most important policy questions in state and national politics. These issues are not organized along a single continuum, of liberalism-conservatism or anything else for that matter, or the correlations among them would be consistently high. A number of state issues are not related with one another, and the same is true for a number of the national issues. Furthermore, the correlations across levels of government are generally weak. Constraint seems restricted to level of government and, within it, to only particular groups of issues. A systematic examination of these issue clusters can add considerably to our understanding of policy thinking.[3]

The national policy issues fall into two distinct clusters, bridged by the ERA issue which is a component of each. Five national policy issues--guaranteed jobs, minority aid, tax cut, economic policy, and ERA--are correlated well with one another. The average correlation among these issues is .25 and the range is .15 to .46. These attitudes also are related substantially to liberal-conservative ideology. The five issues all involve national policy towards a disadvantaged group--the jobless, minorities, and women. (Tax cuts imply less activity on behalf of these groups.) These issues can be identified as the DISADVANTAGED POLICY cluster.

The other national issue cluster includes three "moral" issues--ERA, abortions, and school prayer. Attitudes on each of these issues are well correlated with one another: an average gamma of .25, with a range from .17

to .33. These attitudes too are correlated with self-placement on the liberal-conservative scale, although less strongly than the disadvantaged policy issues. These issues may be labelled the MORAL POLICY cluster.

Except for the ERA issue which bridges the two clusters, attitudes on disadvantaged policy are not correlated with attitudes on moral policy. The only two significant correlations among them are in the wrong direction, with conservatives on the abortion issue more likely to be liberal on job guarantees and economic policy. In spite of the association of all these domestic issues with ideological self-placement, they fall into separate domains in public thinking. The independence of the moral and disadvantaged policy clusters would be complete but for the presence of ERA in each cluster.

These results show an interesting contrast in the social class bases of moral and disadvantaged policy beliefs. Because they are more likely to be disadvantaged themselves, working class people tend to desire government support for the disadvantaged. The issues of morality, on the other hand, tap the conflict between traditional and modern life styles. Here liberal positions are more common among the middle class, whose members hold less traditional attitudes towards the role of women, freedom of choice in abortions, and the observation of religious ritual in the school. ERA may fall into both clusters because of its peculiar characteristics: e.g., perceptions that women are a disadvantaged group are tied to modern rather than traditional values.

One national policy issue is conspicuous in its absence from either cluster, especially the disadvantaged policy cluster. Attitudes towards the size of the national government are only weakly correlated with the other

policy attitudes or with ideology. This was a familiar finding in the 1964-1972 period. Once a core component of ideological thinking about domestic policy, the size of government issue lost its relationship to other policy attitudes when the big government necessary to fulfill liberal aspirations was seen as responsible for Vietnam and suppression of civil liberties (Nie, Verba, Petrocik, 1979, 125-128). By 1976, the size of government issue had regained a clear ideological meaning in national studies (Nie, Verba, Petrocik, 1979, pp. 365-371) but not in Florida.

These patterns of constraint for national policy issues may be unique to Florida. While the nationalization of American politics leads us to expect little variation in perceptions of the national political milieu from state to state, the weakness of two-party competition in states such as Florida may confound expections. To provide external validation for these results, and thus increase confidence in the generalizability of the results from the Florida study, national issue constraint among Floridians was compared with that among a national sample of the American electorate. These comparisons, detailed in Appendix B, show that patterns of constraint between Florida and the nation are similar. Florida can serve as a useful laboratory for studying conditions of constraint in general.

The state policy issues also form two distinct clusters, although neither is as well constrained as the national policy clusters. Again one attitude, involving a state tax cut, bridges the two clusters. The more prominent state cluster involves the issues of tuition, state funding for local government, public school spending, and of course tax cuts. The average gamma among these attitudes is .20, and the range is .12 to .24. While none of the correlations

is high, they are consistently solid. Because the primary focus of these issues is state spending, and even the tax cut question contains the alternative of maintaining current spending, this cluster can be labelled state SPENDING POLICY. The attitudes on the issues of state spending also exhibit substantial relationships to self-placement on the liberal-conservative scale.

The remaining state policy issues, plus the ever-present tax cut issue, faintly outline a second state cluster. This group includes the three state tax issues (tax cuts, the road tax, and tax breaks to attract industry) and the matter of placing a constitutional cap on state spending. Because tax matters predominate, and even a spending cap can be viewed as a device for holding down taxes, this cluster warrants the label of state TAX POLICY. The average gamma correlation between the four issues in this cluster is .12, by far the lowest among the clusters we have defined, and the range of correlations is .02 to .20. Attitudes on state taxes bear little relationship to self-placement on the ideology scale. This suggests that the liberal-conservative contours of state politics are rather limited, embracing matters of state spending but not taxation. Liberal-conservative attitudinal organization has far broader scope at the national level.

These results (summarized in Table 2) confirm our hypothesis that constraint in policy thinking is greater for national than state issues within the Florida public. While constraint appears among certain groups of issues at both levels of government, the organization of national issue beliefs is more coherent--at least when coherence is conceptualized along unidimensional lines.

TABLE 2 ABOUT **HERE**

Most conventional treatments of state and national politics alike presume mass involvement in the liberal-conservative policy debates that have divided political elites since the 1930s. It is already well known that these treatments exaggerate the extent to which such policy thinking has permeated the public on national issues. Our findings on Florida state issues suggest that the exaggeration is even more pronounced when liberal-conservative explanations are applied to mass thinking on state politics. The modest levels of constraint achieved on selected national issues may define the summit of coherent policy thinking. Descent from the summit seems to be quite rapid when one turns to the level of state politics.

There also is evidence in Table 1 that liberal-conservative policy thinking may transcend levels of government, for the state spending cluster and the national disadvantaged cluster are related. The average correlation between them is .21 and the range is .05 to .46. The lowest inter-cluster correlations involve the state tax cut issue--attitudes on which are not significantly related to ideological self-placement. Ideological thinking across levels of government seems to be structured more along programmatic spending than taxing lines.

These results reflect the traditional liberal-conservative cleavage in American politics. At the national level, the basic conflict has been between those who favor and oppose government to take special steps to protect disadvantaged citizens. Tax cuts directed against such federal programs by the Reagan Administration should be resisted by liberals and supported by conservatives. In state policy disputes, the nature of the cleavage undergoes subtle change. State programs are geared more towards supplying basic

Table 2

CONSTRAINT WITH ISSUE CLUSTERS: A SUMMARY*

	Average Inter-item Correlation	Range of Inter-item Correlations
All Issues	.10	-.13 to .46
National Issues		
All National Issues	.13	-.07 to .46
Disadvantaged Cluster	.25	.17 to .33
Moral Cluster	.25	.17 to .33
State Issues		
All State Issues	.11	-.01 to .24
Spending Cluster	.20	.12 to .24
Taxing Cluster	.12	.02 to .20
Inter-level Issues		
Disadvantaged and Spending Clusters	.21	.05 to .46

*Entries are gamma coefficients.

services to all citizens rather than to specific disadvantaged groups. Support for these public services appears to be the hallmark of state liberalism, while opposition to them or at least to increases in them seems to reflect conservatism.

These results also illuminate the often puzzling public responses to calls for tax reductions. That state spending attitudes are unconnected with most tax attitudes accounts for the apparent contradiction in public support for both more state spending and lower state taxes. Furthermore, only spending attitudes exhibit a relationship to ideological self-placement and the federal policy scales. In spite of well-publicized tax revolts in a number of states, attitudes towards taxes seem to remain at the periphery of ideological thinking in Florida. The tax cut issue itself straddles the two state policy domains, but its correlations with spending attitudes are not very strong. The tax revolt may have gestated within the "little tradition" of populism rather than within the "great" tradition of liberalism-conservatism. For tax issues to join other policy issues on the liberal-conservative agenda, sustained attention and absorption of tax issues into mainstream partisan debate undoubtedly are required.[4]

Overall, the results outline the structure of policy thinking within the public. This structure should become sharper as more select groups are examined, as we move up the ladder towards the attentive and sophisticated political elite. For the sake of parsimony, subsequent analysis will be limited to the four distinct attitude clusters identified for the entire sample.[5] We begin with salience, which is uniformly used (often with only implicit theoretical grounding) as an important pre-condition for structured policy thinking.

THE ISSUE SOURCES OF POLICY ATTITUDE CONSTRAINT

Previous studies of the political milieu's impact on the structure of mass policy thinking have focused on the national political climate. Some periods have stimulated higher levels of political awareness and involvement than others. In some, electorates are encouraged to think in programmatic or ideological terms, while such thinking is discouraged by the nature of political conflict in other times. The contrast between the quiescent 1950s and the decade beginning in 1964 is conventionally cited as the best illustration of how changes in the political environment may produce greater structuring in mass thinking about political issues. What has changed, these studies seem to imply, is the salience of political issues.

One novel feature of the present study is that it can record the simultaneous impact of two different political milieus. While national and state politics interact considerably, the institution of federalism still separates their policy domains and produces distinct state and national political worlds. Yet each citizen lives in both worlds. This situation enables us to compare policy thinking under different conditions --providing in a single cross-sectional study the variation in milieu that previous studies have sought in different periods.

We hypothesize that a major source of the greater constraint among national policy issue attitudes is the relatively higher salience of national issues. This hypothesis can be tested by examining constraint under different salience conditions. Salience is measured by asking if respondents thought about the issue a great deal, some, or not much. Normally such a question is posed prior to eliciting a position on the issue, so that respondents for whom

the matter is not salient can be excluded from the substantive follow up. We reversed the order of these questions to be able to study constraint among those who had not thought much about the issue. Because people may indicate some salience even if they have not really thought about an issue, the most reliable indicator of issue salience is assumed to be the response "a great deal".

National policy issues are considerably more salient to our respondents than state issues. Figure 1 shows the percentages of respondents who have answered "a great deal" (see shaded bar) or "some" (see unshaded bar) to the salience question for each policy issue. The differences are startling testimony to the low salience of state policy. No state issue surpasses a national issue in the percentage who think about it some or a great deal. Using the more reliable indicator, thinking about it a great deal, only the issue of spending for public schools is more salient than a national issue.

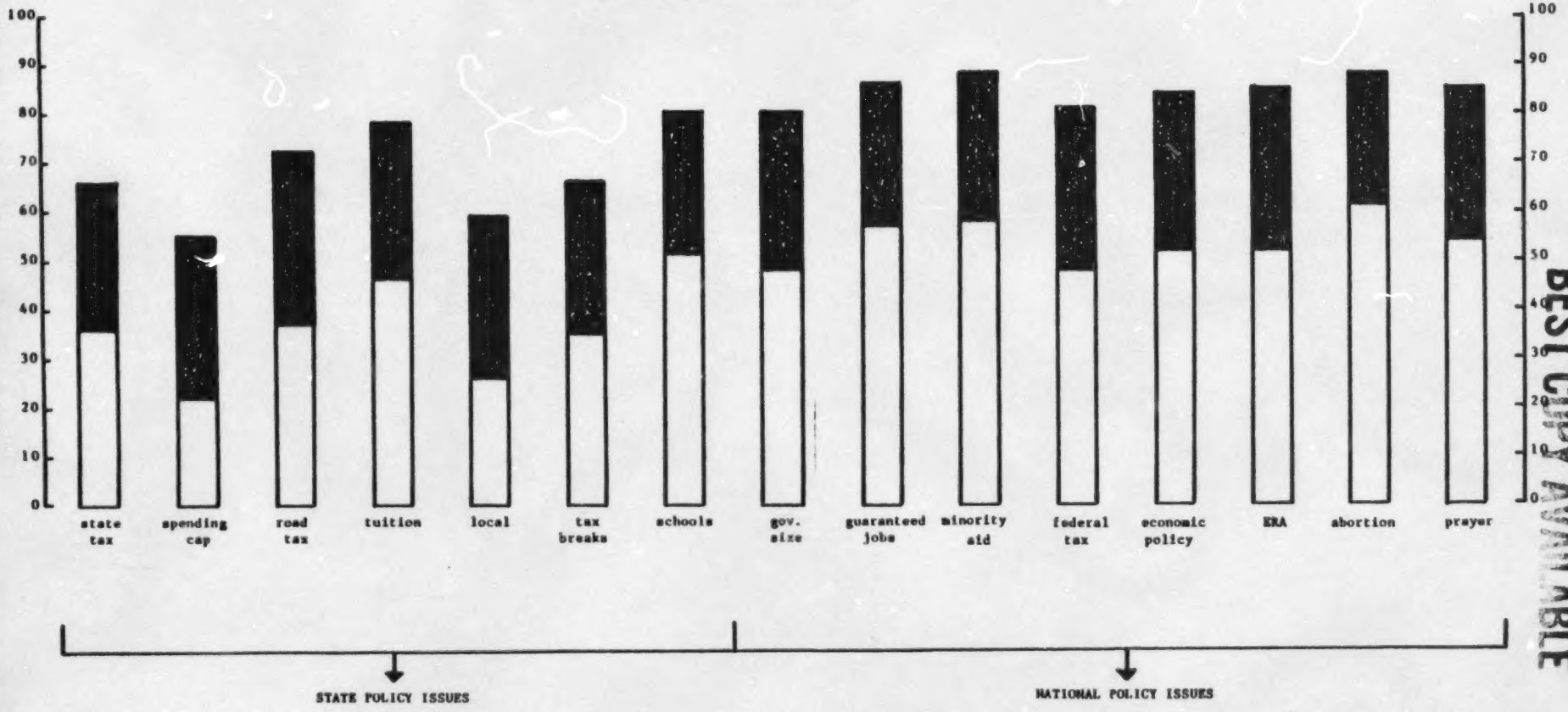
FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Some important state issues are so remote to large portions of the public that more people say they don't think much about them than give any other response. The issue of a constitutional cap on state spending, while it may excite some, produces a long yawn for many. The perennial question of state versus local funding for public services, a very important matter these days since the Florida state government is consciously providing a growing share of local revenues, is likewise of little concern to many. On these two issues, the number to whom the issue is not salient falls just short of a majority.

By contrast, the most salient issues in the series are the question of abortion and the New Deal-Great Society welfare issues of government

Figure 1

Salience of National & State issues



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guarantees of jobs and aid to minorities. That abortion receives so much attention should lay to rest the notion that longevity of an issue alone produces high salience. The abortion issue is of relatively recent vintage, arising largely in response to the Roe v. Wade decision by the Supreme Court in 1973. The high salience of the jobs and minorities issues, on the other hand, belies the equally attractive notion that only moral issues can command nearly universal attention from a mass public. What captures public attention at any one time, it is clear, can be a mix of morally charged and long standing issues. What is significant for our purposes is that the mix does not seem likely to include matters of state policy.

The lower salience of state policy issues may provide the explanation for their lower levels of constraint. But we can do better than provide circumstantial evidence for our hypothesis. A direct test involves computing the issue correlations only among those who find each issue in the pair salient--in effect controlling for salience. Table 3 presents such figures for each issue cluster.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

These comparisons leave no doubt that the lower salience of state issues is responsible to a considerable degree for lower constraint among them. When attention is limited to those who find both issues in the pair salient, constraint rises within all issue clusters and the differences in constraint between state and national issues are narrowed considerably. In fact, public thinking on state spending issues under these conditions is more constrained than thinking about disadvantaged issues. The highest levels of constraint,

Table 3

CONSTRAINT FOR DIFFERENT CLUSTERS

UNDER CONDITIONS OF HIGH ISSUE SALIENCE*

	Average Inter-item Correlation	Range of Inter-item Correlations
National Issues (N = 251 - 386)		
Disadvantaged Cluster	.36	.17 to .61
Moral Cluster	.45	.38 to .52
State Issues (N = 104 - 261)		
Spending Cluster	.38	.20 to .55
Taxing Cluster	.30	.07 to .48

* Includes respondents for whom both items in the pair were issues they thought about a great deal. Entries are gamma correlations.

though, are registered by the moral issue cluster. Overall, restricting attention to the high salience group increases average constraint in state issue clusters by 90% and 150% compared to only 44% and 80%, respectively, on national issues.

Even under the condition of high issue salience, the two different issue clusters at each level of government remain distinct. None of the gamma correlations between moral and disadvantaged issues exceed .20, and three of them are negative. The average gamma between these two clusters is .02. Three of the nine correlations between state spending and taxing issues exceed the arbitrary .20 threshold, as the road tax issue becomes more closely integrated with the spending issues, but the average gamma between issues from the different clusters is .12. In spite of its closer proximity to spending issues under a salience control, adding the road tax issue to the spending cluster is not warranted. It is more highly correlated with tax issues than spending attitudes and would lower the average correlation in the spending cluster if added.

High issue salience, though, does strengthen the integration of state spending and national disadvantaged policy attitudes. These comparisons are made in terms of Pearson's r, but a comparison of gammas should yield the same substantive conclusion. The average r between the two clusters in the absence of salience controls is .15, and the range of correlations is .00 to .38. When restricted to those who find both issues in the pair salient, these correlations increase to .22 on the average, with a range of .05 to .51. This cross-domain structuring is not as pronounced as that within clusters, but it shows that constrained policy thinking can transcend levels of government.

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Furthermore, it is comforting to find that this structuring seems to follow familiar liberal-conservative lines.

One might challenge this interpretation of the finding that higher levels of constraint are achieved when the issues are salient by contending that the relationship is more a function of the refined composition of the high salience group than issue salience per se. This interpretation is undermined by the fact that when both issues are salient moral issues command the highest constraint and the spending cap-road tax combination among the least. No fewer than 52 per cent of the respondents identified any pair of moral issues as highly salient, while only 11 per cent agreed the state issues were salient. The road tax-spending cap group should be much more select, but nevertheless its attitudes are much less constrained.

Given the attention paid to matters of taxation in recent years, the results for the state tax issue cluster are somewhat unexpected. Not only are tax issues salient to fewer Floridians than other issues, generally speaking, but constraint on tax questions is lower than that for any other cluster of issues even for the high salience group. This result supports the proposition advanced earlier that state tax issues have not yet entered the mainstream of ideological discourse.

Two important conclusions emerge from the results of this analysis of policy thinking under conditions of high salience. First, where the issues are salient, constraint is substantially higher. This comports with the expectations of consistency theory from attitude psychology: as the importance of an attitude increases, it is brought more into line with other important similar attitudes. Second, under conditions of high salience, the level of constraint in thinking about state issues resembles that of constraint on national issues, leading to the conclusion that a major share of

the difference in constraint between levels of government is induced by the lower profile of state matters. If state politics were to assume the importance of national politics, it is quite likely that constraint on state issues would improve handsomely.

THE INDIVIDUAL SOURCES OF POLICY ATTITUDE CONSTRAINT

The Florida study also enables us to address the other largely unresolved question about policy thinking: what individual characteristics promote constraint in policy thinking? As we noted earlier, previous research hypothesized that constraint grew with political sophistication which, in turn, was conceptualized as a combination of cognitive ability and political exposure. Mixed research findings regarding this hypothesis have spawned analytical strategies designed to separate the components of sophistication. Converse (1980) has argued that the two principal components, political involvement and cognitive ability, are not interchangeable and that political involvement is probably more important in inducing constraint than sheer cognitive prowess.

The analysis of this section pursues Converse's suggestion to its logical conclusion in the hope of clearing up confusion concerning the sources of constraint. Five different sources are postulated. Rather than conceptualized as alternative measures of political sophistication, they will be employed as separate influences on the quality of policy thinking. We hypothesize that the impact of each depends upon the nature of the policy issues under examination. The availability of policy attitudes from four different domains, two state and two national, provides important variation in the nature of issues.

Higher levels of constraint are thought to result from cognitive ability and political exposure. While not strictly independent of one another, they have quite different conceptual standing. Cognitive ability functions in two ways to improve policy attitude structuring. It enables an individual to find purely logical connections among issues -- to bring attitudes on the same subject into consistency. It also enables the individual to process political information more readily and more accurately so as to identify the prevailing interconnections among issues in elite discourse. Political exposure has little effect on purely logical interconnections but contributes mightily, through continual reinforcement, to the individual's ability to fathom connections between issues in the political arena.

This distinction between "pure" and "political" logic is fundamental to an understanding of alternative sources of constraint. The standard for constrained policy thinking in research on constraint is the interrelationship among issue positions in elite political discourse. Constraint at the elite level has some purely logical roots but is largely the result of political arrangements--e.g., the demands of coalition building and maintenance, the weight of traditional loyalties, and even the differentiation forced by political competition. That Democratic leaders support affirmative action, the Equal Rights Amendment, Israeli foreign policy, nuclear arms control, government creation of jobs, food stamp programs, loans for college students, etc., more than GOP leaders at any particular time is a function of these political arrangements. As a result, the uneducated but experienced political activist is more likely to appear as constrained in issue thinking than the politically naive logician. Or, to put it another way, without some exposure to American politics, even the most conceptually sophisticated thinker would

probably fail the test of attitude constraint on many, if not most, issues.

Yet there are some policy issues that are not integrated in elite political discourse. These issues, as Schattschneider (1960) would have appreciated, lie at the periphery of the prevailing political agenda. Political exposure provides little guidance for the organization of such issue beliefs. What constraint emerges among them is likely to be the result of pure logic rather than the political logic. In responding to a series of questions eliciting their positions on policy issues, the cognitively able are probably more inclined to strive for consistency even where it transcends the bundling of issues in current political debate.

The five different sources of constraint we shall examine are drawn mostly from previous studies of policy thinking and may be differentiated according to their mix of cognitive ability and political exposure. Education has been used as an almost pure measure of cognitive ability in previous studies. A six-item test of political knowledge taps cognitive ability, but political exposure surely has some effect on these test scores. The political participation measure emphasizes the political exposure dimension, but its purity is compromised by the tendency of the better educated to be more active in American politics. The political attentiveness variable, measured as level of interest in both state and national politics, is even more purely an indicator of political exposure, although it too is correlated with education. Finally, ideologism is simply how closely the individual places himself/herself to the poles of the liberal-conservative continuum. Ideologism contains few traces of cognitive ability and is only weakly correlated with the other measures. Rather, it measures exposure to politics plus commitment to the current political logic--at least as that logic is

expressed in liberal-conservative symbols. We expect that ideologism will be a particularly powerful source of constraint on the issues that fall into the liberal-conservative domain. (See Appendix C for the construction of each variable.)[6]

Our hypothesis is that constraint on issue attitudes within the four policy clusters will vary with the sources of constraint. For issues long at the center of the American political agenda, political exposure should be more important than cognitive ability as a condition of constraint. By contrast, where the issues are new to the agenda or lie at its periphery, constraint should manifested more by those with cognitive ability than with political exposure. If these expectations are fulfilled, the question of why previous studies produced somewhat different results can be answered and our theory of the conditions for policy thinking will have been supported. The data for testing this hypothesis are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Probably the first impression one gains from Table 4 is that constraint is almost always higher when only those respondents with high levels of cognitive ability or political exposure are considered. Only twice, both times involving ideologism for issues not central to the traditional liberal-conservative agenda, does constraint for the select group fall below the average for the entire sample. Even when issue salience is not taken into account, both cognitive ability and political exposure typically improve the structuring of policy thinking.

More careful examination of Table 4 supports the view that cognitive ability and political exposure are alternative sources of constraint. This is

Table 4

CONSTRAINT WITHIN DIFFERENT CLUSTERS UNDER COGNITIVE ABILITY, POLITICAL EXPOSURE CONDITIONS

	CONDITION					
	COLLEGE GRADS	HIGH KNOWLEDGE	HIGH ACTIVITY	HIGH INTEREST	STRONG IDEOLOGISM	OVERALL
National Issues						
Disadvantaged						
Average Gamma	.32	.30	.39	.31	.38	.25
Range	.18-.52	.12-.55	.15-.52	.07-.46	.25-.53	.15-.46
Moral						
Average Gamma	.38	.29	.33	.25	.22	.25
Range	.29-.48	.25-.35	.23-.40	.18-.37	.20-.24	.17-.33
State Issues						
Spending						
Average Gamma	.29	.26	.27	.28	.30	.20
Range	.22-.35	.19-.31	.08-.41	.17-.42	.18-.39	.12-.24
Taxing						
Average Gamma	.18	.23	.21	.13	.06	.12
Range	-.03-.33	.06-.45	.01-.29	.03-.25	-.07-.19	.02-.20

best illustrated by comparing the results for the polar opposites, college education and strong ideologism. College education is the purest measure we have of sheer cognitive ability, although its purity is compromised by an empirical correlation with political exposure--an artifact of the high status bias to political activity in America (Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1979). Strong ideologism, as we have argued, represents exposure to politics plus a strong commitment to the traditional lines of liberal-conservative discourse. It combines exposure and internalization. Ideologism is uncorrelated with cognitive ability and, as a consequence, is virtually unadulterated as an explanatory variable.

These polar opposites generate quite different patterns of constraint. On the two clusters that lie at the center of the liberal-conservative political agenda, disadvantaged and spending policy, strong ideologists exhibit relatively high levels of constraint. No other condition produces more constraint on the spending cluster, and only high activity does better on disadvantaged policy. Ideologists achieve **higher** levels of constraint on these issues presumably because of their commitment to the current lines of liberal-conservative conflict.

By contrast, as predicted, the lowest levels of constraint in the moral and taxing clusters occur for the strong ideologists--falling in both cases below the levels for the whole sample. Constraint on these issues, in turn, is much higher for the college educated. Where the political world is not well organized at the elite level, one may infer that cognitive ability provides the logical guidance for organizing issue beliefs. Here the "pure" logic operates more than the "political" logic, and it is fitting that those best able to employ the pure logic turn out to be the more consistent in their

issue thinking.[7]

The picture is clouded when we move to the other conditions--the mixed breeds reflecting both cognitive ability and political exposure. On disadvantaged and spending issues, the high knowledge group exhibits the lowest constraint among the five conditions. Relatively less structuring is to be expected from them on these issues, except that it should be higher than for the educated, who are presumably even more a purely cognitive elite. Just as college grads are more likely to be exposed to politics for status reasons, high scorers on our test of political knowledge are likely to be people with strong cognitive abilities. Neither variable anchors the end of the cognitive ability continuum, and it is perhaps even somewhat disputable that education would lie closer to that pole than political knowledge.

The results for the other conditions offer further support, though it is hardly unqualified, for the ability-exposure hypothesis. All produce higher levels of constraint than are found overall, except for high interest respondents on moral issues where constraint equals that for the whole sample. High activity seems particularly conducive to constraint. The highest levels of constraint on disadvantaged policy issues under any conditions are found among the activists. This is further evidence that commitment to the prevailing political agenda, and activism suggests such a commitment since it occurs predominantly within the realm of party politics, makes for greater structuring of policy beliefs on issues central to the agenda.

This detailed discussion of Table 4 may have obscured its principal message. Constraint does vary considerably across the conditions of cognitive ability and political exposure, but no single condition serves as the most important source of constraint for all issue areas. Obviously constraint can

be a function of either cognitive ability or political exposure but which condition is the more important depends on the issue and its centrality to prevailing political conflicts.

Where previous research and conceptualization on constraint have floundered, it now seems clear, is in generalizing to other issues from the domestic welfare policy issue cluster which has dominated politics since the New Deal. Just because exposure counts for more than cognitive ability on the old, familiar issues does not mean that it is more important on all issues. Alternatively, just because cognitive ability helps citizens structure their thinking on new or peripheral issues does not mean it is necessary for all coherent policy thinking. In other words, to return to our original point of departure, the political milieu influences which political issues become linked in elite political discourse and how durable those linkages are. The political milieu defines the "political logic" and, as a corollary, determines what issue clusters will be left to be organized only by the "pure logic".

CONCLUSION

This paper has focussed on the structure of policy thinking about domestic policy issues in the Florida electorate. This thinking is narrow in scope. Four separate clusters of issue attitudes emerged--involving disadvantaged and moral policy at the national level, taxing and spending policy at the state level. A degree of cross-level organization surfaced, though, between national disadvantaged and state spending policy attitudes. Their relationship to self-reported political ideology links them to the grand liberal-conservative cleavage of present-day politics.

A second key finding is that state attitudes were considerably less constrained than national policy attitudes. This can be explained largely by the lower salience of state issues. Once salience was controlled, similar levels of consistency appeared among state and national policy attitudes. A third finding is that the conditions of high cognitive ability and political exposure almost always promoted greater constraint within all four clusters. These conditions serve as alternative sources of constraint. On issues central to liberal-conservative political debates, political exposure led to more constraint than did cognitive ability. On issues at the periphery of the principal cleavage, on the other hand, cognitive ability was the more important source of constraint.

These findings have important theoretical implications for the study of policy thinking in mass publics. Overall the results demonstrate how the political milieu can stimulate consistency among mass policy attitudes. Previous research has attributed changes in constraint over time to variations in the salience and intensity of issue debate at the elite level. By measuring issue salience directly, the Florida study provides important confirmation for this previously untested inference. The study demonstrates the importance of the political milieu in a second respect. Political exposure is more important than cognitive ability as a condition of constraint on issues imbued with clear liberal-conservative overtones but not on other issues. Not only can this contrast account for contradictory results on the conditions of constraint in previous studies, but it constitutes the second way in which the political milieu is important. A broader conceptualization of the political milieu and how it can affect policy thinking is warranted.

A rather disturbing implication can be drawn from these results for the quality of public input into state policy-making. Public thinking on state policy issues seems compartmentalized rather than broadly integrated. Dealing with issues one-by-one surely limits public influence on the broad directions of public policy and often results in highly inconsistent public demands. The lack of connection between state taxing and spending attitudes, for example, creates serious problems for state policy making by placing contradictory demands for lower taxes but the same or more services side-by-side on the policy agenda. In a time when the states are asked to shoulder more responsibility for domestic policy, it is rather disheartening to find that the state public is less able to think coherently about state issues than about national issues--and the level of coherence for the latter is hardly reassuring.

Domination of the domestic policy agenda by the national government since the 1930s undoubtedly contributed to the lower quality of policy thinking on state issues. As this agenda involves the states more and more, there is good reason to believe that the salience of state policy issues will rise, bringing with it an increase in the structure of policy thinking. After all, it is primarily the lower salience of state issues that prevents them from being more highly constrained. If we may usefully extrapolate the future from our results, though, increased salience of state issues will not solve a basic problem of state politics: the separation in the public mind of taxing and spending. Even tax revolt activity in Florida has not merged these issue domains. As long as they remain distinct, the Florida public will give contradictory signals to political leaders.

The pattern of our results probably is not attributable to the special character of the population of this study. Florida no longer possesses the demographically homogeneous electorate it once had. Strong waves of immigration and the enfranchisement of blacks have transformed it into an unusually heterogeneous state--with large populations of blacks and Hispanics, as well as considerable diversity in the ethnic and regional backgrounds of its white population.

There are two features of the state, though, that might limit generalizability. One is that many Florida residents have not lived in the state for long and may not yet be familiar with its politics. When tested, recency of residence proved to have no impact on our results, but it remains possible that the transient character of the state's population does limit its ability to internalize the lines of state issue dispute. A more likely source of uniqueness lies in the special nature of Florida political milieu itself. While the Florida described by V.O. Key has changed in important respects in the ensuing thirty years, weak two-party competition and fluid of factionalism ("every man for himself") within the dominant Democratic party remain important political characteristics. The absence of a coherent organization to elite politics itself may limit the ability of the Florida electorate to structure its own policy thinking. In other words, the Florida political milieu may not be conducive to the development of consistency and scope in state issue thinking. But, if true, this provides all the more support for our principal conclusion--that politics plays a crucial part in structuring mass policy attitudes.

Footnotes

1. Axelrod also uncovered an alternative cluster of well-constrained issue beliefs that cut across traditional liberal-conservative lines. This "populism" dimension included domestic and foreign policy issues. Non-voters were well constrained on issues within the populism cluster, while the educated were only weakly constrained. The Axelrod study raises the intriguing possibility that elite liberal-conservative political debates do not provide the only organizing frame for mass political beliefs. The "liberalism-conservatism" that serves as the "great tradition" of American political life may be in competition with a "little tradition" of populism. Presence of an alternative organizing principle undercuts the conventional notion that the masses are necessarily less constrained in their issue thinking than elites if they are less constrained along liberal-conservative lines. In the second wave of this panel study, we have included a multiple-item measure of populism so that we can test Axelrod's intriguing hypothesis directly. For the present, however, this hypothesis shall remain untested.

2. Missing data were handled by the pair-wise deletion procedure. As a result, each correlation is based on a different number of cases. For the issue attitudes, the number of cases excluded because of missing data is small, because a salience filter was not used to screen out respondents. For ideological self-placement, there are many more missing data cases because the 28 percent of the sample who did not think of themselves in liberal-conservative terms were excluded.

3. A cluster among policy attitudes is defined by relatively high in-group correlations and relatively low correlations of in-group attitudes with out-group attitudes. The average intercorrelation and the intercorrelation range are useful criteria for in-group consistency. This method of identifying clusters follows the same logic and will yield the same conclusions as more formal techniques for cluster analysis, such as factor analysis. Formal cluster analysis techniques are not employed so as to retain as much comparability as possible with previous studies.

4. There is evidence that these observations may apply as well to California, a state which has been at the cutting edge of tax revolt activity. Studies of public attitudes towards various tax reform measures on the California ballot in recent years suggest that Californians want to maintain services and pay lower taxes. Also liberal-conservative ideology is not consistently related to tax cut attitudes (Sears and Citrin, 1982). These findings strengthen our surmise that the tax revolt combines traditional conservatism with populism, thus confounding attempts to explain it in terms of mainstream liberal-conservative conflict. Of course, one wonders how long this odd alliance of conservatives and populists can endure, especially if spending cuts eat into programs that disadvantaged groups (which contain many people with populist sentiments) depend upon.

5. There is a compelling practical reason for limiting anlaysis to the four issue clusters. The gamma correlations for each pair of issue attitudes must be computed from cross-tabulation tables--a costly procedure for a computer. It is much more economical to calculate Pearson product-moment correlations among the variables, but they are not appropriate as measures of constraint because they require interval-level data. For this reason, and because previous studies have relied upon gamma, the results focus on gammas. But Pearson r's have been calculated for the full issue matrices wherever possible. The results of these calculations show that the scope of policy thinking does not increase significantly at either level of government under conditions of salience cognitive ability, or political exposure. At the state level, spending and taxing issues remain largely independent of one another, as do disadvantaged and moral issues at the national level. As expected, the constraint between state spending and national disadvantaged policy thinking does heighten somewhat under these conditions but not enough to qualify as a new inter-governmental issue cluster.

6. These five sources of constraint are intercorrelated with one another. The strongest correlations occur between adjacent pairs on the ability-exposure continuum implicit in the preceding discussion: education-knowledge ($r = .37$), knowledge-participation ($r = .47$), participation-attentiveness ($r = .38$). Ideologism is the only variable that has very weak correlations ($r = .10$ to $.15$) with the others. It is apparently not affected by cognitive ability, participation, or attentiveness. This suggests that our findings for ideology should be the most clearcut--unadulterated by possible causal influences of the other variables.

7. An alternative explanation for constraint among moral issues is that they are organized along religious value lines. Because of their lack of exposure to the more fundamentalist strain of religious beliefs, scholars are inclined to ignore the influence of religion on politics. Yet political conflict over the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, and prayers in the school may well be deeply rooted in religious beliefs (Lopatto, 1982). As a crude test of the impact of religious values, constraint on moral issues was examined among "born again" Christians. They were no more likely than other Floridians to exhibit constraint on ERA, abortion, and school prayer issues. A more sensitive measure, though, might show religious values to be an important alternative source of constraint to the more familiar liberal-conservative ideology.

Appendix A

Wording and Format of Policy Issue Questions

STATE ISSUE QUESTIONS

STATE TAX. Should state and local taxes be reduced even if public services have to be cut? (20%) OR Do you think we need these services even if it means paying the same taxes? (53%)*

SPEND CAP. Should a constitutional amendment be passed to limit state spending? (24%) OR Should state spending be decided as it is now by the state legislature? (46%)

ROAD TAX. Should taxes be raised to provide more money for state road maintenance and construction? (34%) OR Should the state have to get by without extra tax money for roads even if our roads would not be as well maintained? (40%)

TUITION. The state now pays a large share of the costs for a student's education at state colleges and universities. Should the state continue to pay a large share of these costs? (41%) OR Should students themselves have to pay most of the costs of their education at state colleges and universities? (36%)

LOCAL. Should the state of Florida provide funding for city and county services that the localities can not fund for themselves? (42%) OR Should the state stay out of local affairs, even if cities and counties don't have the money to provide certain services? (30%)

TAX BREAKS. Should the state offer tax benefits to persuade new industries to come to Florida? (55%) OR Should no special tax advantages be offered to new industries even if that means they may go to other states? (24%)

SCHOOL. Should Florida increase spending to upgrade the quality of public schools to a level of national distinction? (56%) OR Should state spending for public schools be kept at the present level? (24%)

NATIONAL ISSUE QUESTIONS

GOV SIZE. Is the government in Washington too powerful for the good of the country and the individual person? (36%) OR Do you feel that the powers of the government in Washington are not too great considering the serious problems it must solve? (31%)

JOB GUAR. Should the government in Washington see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living (23%) OR Should the government just let each person get ahead on his own? (53%)

*The figures in parentheses are the percentages of all respondents who adopted each position.

MIN AID. Should the government in Washington make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks and other minority groups? (34%) OR Should the government make no special effort to help minorities because they should help themselves? (37%)

FED TAX. Should taxes people pay to the national government in Washington be reduced even if public services have to be cut? (33%) OR Do we need these public services even if it means paying the same taxes? (37%)

ECON POL. Should the national government in Washington take action to reduce the inflation rate, even if it means unemployment might go up a lot? (44%) OR Should the government take action to reduce the rate of unemployment, even if it means inflation might go up a lot? (18%)

ERA. Should the Equal Rights Amendment be added to the Constitution to give women equal rights? (38%) OR Do the rights and privileges of women require no additional protection by the Constitution? (40%)

ABORTION. Should women be free to choose to have an abortion if they wish? (58%) OR Should the government pass laws to make abortion illegal? (27%)

PRAYER. Should public schools be allowed to start each day with a prayer? (68%) OR Do you feel that prayers should not be allowed in the public schools, but should be taken care of by the family and the church? (20%).

QUESTION FORMAT

These questions were asked exactly in the order in which they are listed here and in identical format. After the alternatives had been posed, respondents were asked: "Which position do you prefer?" The positions were restated (in abbreviated form) and the passage "or do you feel you are in the middle between these two positions?" was added to provide an explicit middle category. Other, depends, and don't know responses were coded.

After the position question was asked, intensity of feeling was measured (only for those taking one of the two alternative positions) by asking: "Do you feel strongly or not so strongly about that?" The combination of the original position (including the middle category) and intensity produced the 5-category issue measure. Finally, salience was measured at the end of the sequence by asking all respondents: "Have you thought about this issue a great deal, some, or not much?"

Appendix B

National Issue Attitude Constraint in Florida and Nationwide

Seven of the eight national policy issue questions were adapted for telephone interviewing from questions asked in the 1980 National Election Study survey. These questions are not strictly comparable. The wording was significantly different for the tax cut, government size, ERA and school prayer questions. For the latter three also, only two response options were allowed in the national study in contrast to five (including a middle category) in the Florida study. The wording of the economic policy, minority aid, and job guarantee questions was virtually identical in the two studies, but the national study used a seven-point scale to record responses while the Florida study used only five categories. These differences are sufficient to account for different correlations between the two studies. Given the absence of clear middle categories and the larger number of response options in four cases, one might expect different correlations between the studies (Schuman and Presser, 1977).

The levels of constraint recorded in the two studies are strikingly similar, in spite of the differences in question format between them. This is especially true where the most comparable questions--on economic policy, minority aid, and job guarantees--are involved. The relevant gamma correlations are presented in Table B1, with the gammas for the national survey in parentheses. While the coefficients for the national sample are generally larger, the differences are not great and on the three most comparable items are negligible. Significantly, the national study data exhibit signs of two distinct issue clusters--one for disadvantaged policy issues, the other on moral policy, with ERA contained in both. Only on the government size question do the two studies yield quite different results. This attitude is well integrated with the disadvantaged policy attitudes in the national study but not for Florida.

Table 81

COMPARING CONSTRAINT ON NATIONAL ISSUES:
FLORIDA VS. THE U.S.*

	JOB GUARANTEE	MINORITY AID	TAX CUT	ECONOMIC POLICY	ERA	SCHOOL PRAYER
GOV SIZE	09 (27)	06 (20)	21 (33)	09 (22)	05 (14)	01 (05)
JOB GUARANTEE		39 (31)	20 (41)	27 (27)	32 (35)	03 (03)
MINORITY AID			15 (30)	16 (19)	26 (31)	06 (17)
TAX CUT				20 (44)	18 (44)	03 (05)
ECONOMIC POLICY					21 (06)	00 (13)
ERA						26 (39)

*Matrix entries are gamma coefficients, without the leading decimal point, for the Florida sample and the national sample (within parentheses).

Sources: The national sample data come from the 1980 National Election Study survey, conducted by the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan.

Appendix C

Construction of Measures for Individual Sources of Constraint

EDUCATION. Four categories of educational achievement are used in analysis: college graduate, some college, high school graduate, and less than high school education. High education is completed college (N=173).

POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE. Measured by the sum of correct answers to six questions, three concerning each level of government. The questions elicited knowledge about both policy and politics. They required the respondent to: name the governor of Florida, a member of the Florida legislature, and one U.S. Senator from Florida; and identify the party in control of the U.S. House of Representatives, defense as an area of proposed federal budget increases, and roads/highways as the problem addressed by the proposed increase in the Florida gas tax. Five or six correct answers denoted high knowledge (N= 162).

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION. Measured by the number of state and national political activities engaged in from the following set: registered to vote, voted for president in 1980, voted in all previous presidential elections, always voted in previous state and local elections; and since January 1980 attended political meetings, contributed money to a party or candidate, displayed a campaign button or sticker, worked for a candidate or a party or an issue cause, ran for office, written or talked to public officials, written a letter to the editor about politics, and participated in a demonstration. Activists were designated as those who had performed at least four of these activities (N=95).

POLITICAL ATTENTIVENESS. Based on parallel state and national questions: "How interested are you in (state/national) government in (Tallahassee/ Washington) and (state/national) politics--very interested, somewhat interested, a little interested, or not at all interested?" High attentiveness required that respondents be very interested in both levels of government (N=157).

IDEOLOGISM. Derived by folding the conventional seven-point liberal-conservative scale at its mid-point ("middle of the road") so that strong liberals and strong conservatives have the highest scores. Those who did not think of themselves in liberal, conservative terms were eliminated from analysis. Ideologists are strong liberals or strong conservatives (N=203).

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